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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2065
INFO RUEHXX/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE; NSC FOR ABRAMS/DORAN/LOGERFO

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TAGS: [KPAL](#) [KWBG](#) [PREL](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: HAMAS RESPONSE TO QUARTET MEETING

REF: FBIS GMP20060510541004

11. (SBU) SUMMARY: The PA government and HAMAS leadership put out varied responses to the Quartet's decision to establish a mechanism to deliver aid to Palestinians. Prime Minister (PM) Isma'il Hanniyah complained that the international community is still placing conditions on the PA. Foreign Minister (FM) Mahmud al-Zahar described the decisions as a sign that the "international siege8 against the PA is beginning to erode. Official HAMAS spokesmen Ghazi al-Hamad continued his criticism of the Quartet. END SUMMARY.

PM Hanniyah Still Skeptical

12. (SBU) PM Isma'il Hanniyah complained to reporters in a May 10 statement that the Quartet decision to deliver assistance to Palestinians while circumventing the PA had not yet broken the "siege" against the Palestinian people saying, "The Quartet is still making conditions that it presents from time to time in an attempt to push the government to make more concessions which affect Palestinian rights and also legitimize the occupation." Separately, Palestinian media sources reported that Hanniyah telephoned Syrian President Bashar al-Asad and Yemeni President Ali Abdallah Salih on May 10 to thank them for their support of the Palestinian people (ref A).

FM al-Zahar Looking to
Declare a Victory

13. (SBU) FM Mahmud al-Zahar was unusually upbeat in a May 10 interview with Palestinian reporters. Al-Zahar described the Quartet decision as the "first sign of a breakthrough8 for the &European position8 regarding the HAMAS-led PA over US and Israeli policy. Al-Zahar predicted that the forthcoming mechanisms for delivering aid to Palestinians would be &useful8 in ending the &siege against the PA.8 (COMMENT: FM al-Zahar has previously indicated to reporters that he is in touch with unspecified European governments and is likely eager to claim a diplomatic "success." END COMMENT.) During an interview with al-Jazeera television, HAMAS spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri struck a similar tone with reporters describing the Quartet decision as "a breach of the international siege on the Palestinian people."

Official Spokesman
Continues Criticism

14. (SBU) Government spokesman Ghazi al-Hamad praised efforts by "some members of the Quartet" to provide assistance to Palestinians while criticizing the discrepancy between how the international community deals with the PA and the GOI. Al-Hamad told reporters: "We are hoping that the Quartet will become more positive towards the government as the elected representative of the Palestinian people." However, al-Hamad criticized the Quartet as "lacking in seriousness" given the diplomatic body's refusal to address Israeli abuses and added that he "regrets" the Quartet continued to insist on PA acceptance of previously signed agreements.

WALLES